20:Ominde 1-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
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III

THE SCHOOL AGE

From Six to Eleven Years

157 The school-going age for the Luo girl is characterised
L8 by its transitional nature. It is chiefly a time of useful activity, for it is this age to which society has assigned the duty of nursing, and young girls begin and end their nursing service during this period. The mother now transforms the free day of play activity into real work and mobilizes the potential abilities of the young girl for her traditional education. The benefit reaped by the family is a secondary result, because the training given at this stage is part of a long process of education for married life. So far as the girl is concerned, the interest shown in nursing is more intense in the earlier phase of this age—at about eight to nine years.

With the increasing maturity of her mental life, the young girl begins to take an interest in the household duties of older girls, and thus associates nursing with girls of a younger age. We therefore find among the older girls of the age-group a section which despises nursing. The general domestic work of the age includes collecting firewood, fetching water in small containers, and keeping the fire burning while food cooks during the absence of the mother. Firewood is collected from
[3/3] round the village or sometimes further afield in company with older girls. In the groups the older girls may direct the younger ones where to find good firewood, but most of the collecting is done individually by the girl herself. The quantity carried increases as the child
[3/2] grows older, and the container in which water is carried also varies similarly. When her mother is away, the